ANNUAL ADMINISTRATION REPORT OF THE SIND FOREST CIRCLE FOR THE YEAR 1894-95.

INTRODUCTION.

The principal feature of the year's administration is the gradual reduction in the working charges, due to a beginning having been made to effect direct sales from the Forests, thus following the example of other Circles both in the Bombay Presidency and elsewhere in India.

2. The time is drawing very near when the Forest Department in Sind will no longer be looked upon as a wood-supplying agency, pure and simple, for the North-Western Railway and other public bodies, and its officers from the head of the Department to the lowest subordinate will, under the method of working just introduced,—that of selling the standing crops in the coupes set apart for exploitation in each year,—be freed from duties which, to say the least of them, were out of the common and very often vexatious.

3. The additions to the area of the Reserved Forests during the year under report amounted to 50,796 acres, while the exclusions, which took place only in the Sukkur and Naushahro divisions, aggregated 37,945 acres, the net result being an increase of 12,851 acres. The Protected Forests, which are very few and far between, were not added to, but on the contrary a small forest, having an area of 183 acres, was disforested.

4. The office of the Forest Settlement and Demarcation Officer for Sind was closed at the end of March 1895. During the tenure of office of Mr. Barrow, I. C. S., the Special Officer, 10,996 and 95,193 acres were notified under Sections 4 and 19, respectively, of the Indian Forest Act, and 38,330 acres were disforested under Section 26.

The total cost of the settlement operations for the period extending from 27th October 1892 to 26th March 1895 was Rs. 7,581 exclusive of Mr. Barrow's pay and allowances.

5. The work of demarcation was much behind-hand, and to carry it out the appointment of a special officer has been proposed.

6. The survey of the riverain forests by a party of the Government of India has, it would appear, made considerable progress and the maps of a greater portion of the areas that have been surveyed will soon be ready for issue.

7. No change was made in the rough scheme of working the forests which came into operation during the year 1891-92.

8. Very little progress was made towards cutting up the forests into compartments owing to want of measurers. Now that a qualified Surveyor is attached to each Division, it will be seen that this important work proceeds satisfactorily.

9. Repairs to existing buildings and construction of new ones cost Rs. 1,694.

10. The cases tried by Magistrates exhibit an increase. The percentage of failures has also risen notably in the Naushahro Division. The number of cases compounded by Divisional Forest Officers under Section 67 of the Indian Forest Act remained nearly the same as that of the previous year.

11. Forest fires caused less destruction as compared to the preceding year, and their number fell from 107 in the year 1893-94 to 60 in 1894-95. This is mostly due to favourable conditions prevalent during the year.

12. The year was one of abnormal inundation, and the results of the natural and artificial reproduction were on the whole satisfactory.

13. The realizations from grazing fees have shown some improvement, and a further expansion of revenue from this source may well be looked for.

14. Sales of timber, firewood and charcoal amounted to Rs. 5,76,616 and other revenue to Rs. 1,03,207.

15. The financial results of the Forest year are satisfactory, both the gross and net revenue being in excess of the previous year by Rs. 571 and Rs. 41,284, respectively.

CHAPTER I.

Extension and Constitution of State Forests.

I.—Alteration of Area.

Changes during the year.

16. The changes in the area under the management and control of the Forest Department in the Sind Circle that have taken place during the past year are given in detail in Form No. 46. The following abstract statement shows the net results of these changes :—

Class of Forest.	At the commencement of the year.		Changes during the year.				At close of the year.		Remarks.
			Added.		Excluded.				
	Square miles.	Acres.	Square miles.	Acres.	Square miles.	Acres.	Square miles.	Acres.	
Reserved	976	483	79	236	59	185	996	534	
Protected	4	555	...	...	...	183	4	372	
Total ...	981	398	79	236	59	368	1,001	266	

Explanation of alteration of area.

17. The particulars of the changes by divisions are as below :—

Sukkur.—There was a gain of 5,576 acres reserved by Government Notification No. 2405, dated 25th March 1895, and of 5 acres owing to a rectification of figures made under the Revision Survey. The loss amounted to 33,303 acres, consisting of the disforestment of 9,432 acres in Rohri Taluka under Government Resolution No. 5857, dated 10th July 1894, and of 23,871 acres in Thul Taluka under Government Resolution No. 3129, dated 26th April 1895. No additions have been made to the protected areas, but on the other hand a small block of 183 acres, known as Macaulay Forest, near Jacobabad, has been excluded.

As regards disforestments in this division, I am constrained to remark that the exclusion of 9,432 acres in the Rohri Taluka for the extension of cultivation was an ill-advised measure. The area in question was well wooded with an excellent growth of Kundee (*Prosopis Spicigera*) and capable of yielding at the very least five lacs cubic feet per annum besides being in close proximity of the North-Western Railway line between Rohri and Sangi stations. When it is remembered that it has been difficult to find some 50,000 acres conveniently situated to meet the requirements of the North-Western Railway and that of the Quetta Commissariat, and for the purpose of opening a cheap and permanent supply to the latter a scheme was under the consideration of Government to create near Kot Sultan a Tali (*Dalbergia Sissoo*) Forest on the lines of the Chunga Manga plantation in the Punjaub, the disforestment of this block is not intelligible. In a case like this, I consider the interests of Government in the Forest Department ought to have prevailed over those in the Revenue Department. Moreover, it is necessary to state here that the conversion